

New NDDOT Director appointed

Governor Burgum appointed Tom Sorel as the new North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Director in August. Sorel served as Minnesota DOT Commissioner overseeing 5,000 employees with a \$4.3



Tom Sorel

billion annual budget from 2008-2012. He received the Presidential Honor for Leadership relating to the Minnesota I-35W bridge collapse, response, recovery and rebuild. Prior to working at Minnesota DOT, he had a 30-year career with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, serving as administrator of its St. Paul Division from 2005 to 2008.

Sorel most recently served as chief operating officer of the Minnesota Trucking Association. He previously ran his own transportation consulting firm in Woodbury, Minn., and served as vice president of surface transportation for Serco North America, working on intelligent transportation systems and other areas. A native of Plattsburgh, New York, Sorel earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from the State University of New York in Buffalo and holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from Thomas College in Waterville, Maine. He and his wife, Laurie, have one son.

Meet and Greet events to be held across the state

NDDOT Director Tom Sorel is looking forward to meeting legislators, so you will soon receive an Invitation to a *Meet and Greet* event. He would like to visit with you about transportation in your area, so the event will be held at different DOT shops throughout the state later this fall. The invitation stating times and locations will be arriving in your email soon.

New Lewis and Clark Bridge open to traffic

Lt. Governor Brent Sanford along with NDDOT and federal, state and local officials opened the new Lewis and Clark Bridge on US Highway 85 south of Williston in August. The opening of the Lewis and Clark Bridge is part of the US Highway 85 four-lane expansion, which included over \$340 million of state money invested into the bridge, two bypasses and 60 miles of highway between Watford City and Williston.

The \$80 million bridge project includes construction, engineering and design of a new four-lane bridge, replacing the former two-lane bridge which was originally built in 1973. Other parts of the project included bridge lighting, rebuilding the roadway leading up to the bridge, and the construction of a wildlife crossing specifically designed for moose located south of the bridge. This specific kind of wildlife crossing is a first for North Dakota.

Currently, the bridge is open to two-lanes of traffic. Contractors will work for the next year to dismantle and remove the old bridge. Motorists will see final construction elements of the project taking place as contractors continue to work on final phases of the project. The Lewis and Clark Bridge will be fully open to four lanes of traffic once all work is complete.



Vehicles travel across the new Lewis and Clark Bridge near Williston for the first time in August.

North Dakota residents can now renew driver's license online

North Dakota residents can now renew their driver's license online. NDDOT launched this new online tool in August for eligible drivers between the ages of 21 and 65 who have previously renewed in person after turning 21.

This new service allows residents to renew their driver's license any time of day without having to visit a driver's license office. Online renewals are available to citizens every other renewal cycle.

The online driver's license renewal service is one of several customer-focused services the NDDOT has implemented to make it easier for citizens to receive services. This system provides North Dakota noncommercial (Class D and/or M) licenses, *CDL applicants must renew in person*.

To renew online, go to <https://apps.nd.gov/dot/dlts/dlos/renewal/>



NDDOT applies for federal grants

The NDDOT is applying for an Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant for the Long X Bridge replacement project. The INFRA program will make approximately \$1.5 billion available to help rebuild America's infrastructure. Twenty-five percent of the \$1.5 billion is to be dedicated to rural projects, i.e. in areas with less than 50,000 population according to the 2010 Census. This type of grant has been highly competitive in the past.

The Department is also applying for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant for two future state highway construction projects: A two-phase project on ND 1804 (roughly between the Ross and Epping turns) and a reconstruction of Memorial Highway in Mandan. TIGER grants are highly competitive with projects ranging from \$1 to \$25 million. Grant recipients will be announced in 2018.



Road construction crews work on I-94 near Bismarck

Construction season nears completion

Road construction season for the NDDOT has been productive this year with approximately 200 projects planned throughout the state and about \$465 million of work taking place on state highways. Many projects are in the final stages and work is expected to continue through November, weather permitting.

Department working with local officials on section sites

The NDDOT is working on optimization of maintenance services. Per Senate Bill 2012, the Department is coordinating the use of closed section facilities by consulting with representatives of the political subdivisions where the section site is located in the following order: first with the county, second with the city, and third with the township. Results as of this date are listed below:

- New England - Hettinger County interested in leasing section building & receiving a plow.
- Starkweather - Since session, it was decided to continue using the Starkweather section until Cando section facility is completed next summer.
- Fessenden - Lease in effect for many years. Its current lease is the model for new leases.
- Courtenay - No interest to date.
- Gackle - County lease negotiated, in process. County not interested in a plow.
- Litchville - County lease negotiated, in process. County not interested in a plow.
- Finley - No action to date.
- Mayville - Hillsboro Section is under construction to consolidate sections. Traill County is not interested in leasing building or receiving a plow. The NDDOT has started discussions with the city of Mayville.